

This is a translation By Prabhjot Singh of the following Katha, audiofile of which can be found here: <http://www.keertan.org/keertan/Katha/Giani%20Sant%20Singh%20Jee%20Maskeen/Brahm%20Gyan/Brahm%20Gyan.mp3>

----- BRAHM GYAAN -----

Religious scholars believe that entire knowledge in the world can be divided into just two categories, no more. First is materialistic knowledge and the other is the knowledge of God. The knowledge of worldly affairs, and the knowledge of Nirankaar. The knowledge of exterior, and the knowledge of interior. The rivers of all the knowledge ultimately end in one of these two oceans. According to religious scholars, the purpose of attainment of both these types of knowledge is this: By gaining knowledge of the elements and materials, man wants to make them adapt to himself. Human being has realised one cannot attain contentment from an element until that element is adapted and made favourable to suit his wishes. If the blowing wind is too hot, (looh), and the temperature has crossed 50 degrees, man conditions (Sanskrit: Vata-ankool) the temperature of the air according to his wishes . Similarly, the natural characteristic of water is to flow down to lower altitudes, but if one stays above ground level (on a higher altitude), then the wish is to make water adapt to one's wish - that it must flow upwards, even though the natural tendency of water is to flow down to lower altitudes. So, the purpose of acquiring knowledge of elements, materials and the exterior is to make them adapt to one's wish because, unless they are made favourable, one cannot attain satisfaction from them. To cite more examples - A farmer makes the soil (dharti) favour him so that he can grow the crop he wants by sowing the appropriate seeds. Similarly, man has made fire favour him in variety of ways, which can fulfill his various needs. Fire/fuel helps cook food, drives cars and trains, big factories also run with the power of fuel/fire. Moreover, the human body is also made up of five elements, and these five elements are just materials.

Since man realised that unless one makes the elements favour him, no contentment could be achieved, he started extending his desire to make other human beings adapt to him as well. Many notorious kings, leaders and dictators bear this very philosophy - that everyone else must follow whatever they say, instead of letting them follow their own beliefs. Actually, referring to such dictators, shahenshahs, maharajahs etc. as humans is insulting to the whole humanity. For instance, Genghis khan was so insensitive, he would actually enjoy and grin whenever his soldiers' horses crushed the corpses beneath their feet. 'Halaku' would get sadistic pleasure out of watching people suffer and wriggle with pain. Aurangzeb, the infamous moghul emperor, celebrated and danced the whole day after having killed his three brothers. He sacrificed his brothers because they did not adapt to his way of thinking. Because of this very reason, he imprisoned his father in a small, dingy cell, where he eventually died of thirst.

As man started to realise that he can make the elements of fire, water, earth, air adapt according to his desires and wishes, he started becoming more and more arrogant. The more arrogant he became, the more he started going further away from Nirankaar. Maskeen Ji says, the present yug is an immensely arrogant yug. Just as dictators and tyrants would get pleasure and satisfaction out of controlling others, some religious, heretical gurus try/tried their best to control and adapt people to submit to their wishes. Maskeen ji says he is amazed at this because, whenever Guru Nanak Dev ji or Guru Arjan Dev Ji refers to someone, they use Sant, Bhai, Sadhu like polite and gentle words.

ਕਰਉ ਬੇਨੰਤੀ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਮੀਤਾ ਸੰਤ ਟਹਲ ਕੀ ਬੇਲਾ ॥

karo baenanthee sunahu maerae meethaa santh ttehal kee baelaa ||

Listen, my friends, I beg of you: now is the time to serve the Saints!

Maskeen Ji says, one can order a follower (chela) instead, there is no need to 'request' him. Nah, Guruji does request (benti) instead. Guruji do not not even use the word 'chela', He refers to them as 'friend'. If Guruji saw immense arrogance in someone, this is the way He would make that individual understand:

ਸਾਧੋ ਮਨ ਕਾ ਮਾਨੁ ਤਿਆਗਉ ॥

saadhho man kaa maan thiaago ||

: Holy Saadhus: forsake the pride of your mind.

Even though there is no need to use polite words like Sadhu to refer to an arrogant person, still Guruji does.

So, what IS the meaning of Ahankaar (arrogance)? 'Ahaam' means I am better than others. As much it is a crime to belittle someone, CONSIDERING others as inferior is equal a crime too. Maskeen Ji apologises for saying that, although not many people actually belittle others explicitly, they still consider them inferior in one way or another. But Dhan Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaaj, Dhan Guru Teg Bahadur Ji Mahraaj do not even consider others in any way diminutive to them. So, although the person may be arrogant, still Guruji refers to him as 'Sadhho'.

Maskeen Ji tells a little story -

One time a brahmin of haridwaar asked Guru Nanak Dev ji, 'Who is this person that plays such beautiful rabaab and sings praises of the Lord to you? Is he your follower (chela)?' (referring to Bhai Mardana ji)

Guru Nanak Dev Ji said, 'No, he is not not my chela.'

'Is he your servant, your sevak then?'

Babaji replied, 'No, he isnt my sevak either.'

The brahmin was used to such language only, the so called 'gyani'. Thus, the wiser the gyani, the more inferior he consider others. Maskeen Ji says knowledge is the most forceful of the roots of arrogance (Ahankaar), then comes arrogance of wealth. A particular type of seed bears only one type of fruit. A Mango tree bears only mangoes, not bananas. Wheat fields produce wheat, not lentils. Out of lentil crops comes lentils only, and not corn. But unlike all these examples, there are thousands of seeds of arrogance. Bhagat Ravidas Ji counts some of these 'seeds' :

ਹਮ ਬਡ ਕਬਿ ਕੁਲੀਨ ਹਮ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਹਮ ਜੋਗੀ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ॥

ham badd kab kuleen ham panddith ham jogee sanniaasee ||

I am a great poet, of noble heritage; I am a Pandit, a religious scholar, a Yogi and a Sannyasi;

The arrogance, that I am no ordinary poet, I am poet of great literary stature. Thus, the bigger and famous the poet, the more arrogant he is, Maskeen Ji says this is from his own personal experience. Whether such poets write in hindi, punjabi or urdu, they consider others nothing more than dust of their feet.

The arrogance of my kul - my caste, my heritage. Just by attaching this reason to self, one treats others as inferior, as if others are a nobody.

The arrogance of being a pandit, meaning a scholar - one who has read many granths, knows a lot about grammar and vocabulary of shaaastars and purans. The bigger and more knowledgeable the pandit, the bigger the ego and 'I'.

The arrogance of being a yogi, which in itself is contradictory to the word 'Yogi' which means one that is attached (to Akaal Purakh), one that has got rid of his Ahankaar. But Maskeen ji says, the bigger the Yogi, the more arrogant he is, this again out of his personal interactions with a few such 'Yogis' of Punjab.

Kabir Ji says:

ਆਪਸ ਕਉ ਦੀਰਘੁ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਅਉਰਨ ਕਉ ਲਗ ਮਾਤ ॥

aapas ko dheeragh kar jaanai aouran ko lag maath ||

You believe that you yourself are great, and that others are small.

Such arrogant individuals believe they are 'complete alphabets' while consider others just 'lagaa matraa, sihaari, bihaari' and nothing more.

ਮਨਸਾ ਬਾਚਾ ਕਰਮਨਾ ਮੈ ਦੇਖੇ ਦੋਜਕ ਜਾਤ ॥੨॥

manasaa baachaa karamanaa mai dhaekhae dhojak jaath ||2||

Those who are false in thought, word and deed, I have seen them going to hell. ||2||

Kabir ji says he has seen such people going straight to hell. So even though such individuals may be of religious nature, still they are headed straight to hell because of their Ahankaar.

Maskeen Ji now goes back to explain Bhagat Ravidas Ji's tukk: The arrogance of being a Sanyaasi. The word 'Sanyaasi' literally means 'Sunn de vich Aasan' :

ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਅਨਹਤ ਤਹ ਨਾਦ ॥

sunn samaadhh anehath theh naadh ||

The Deepest Samaadhi, and the unstruck sound current of the Naad are there.

ਕਹਨੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਅਚਰਜ ਬਿਸਮਾਦ ॥

kehan n jaaee acharaj bisamaadh ||

The wonder and marvel of it cannot be described. (Ang 293, SGGS Ji)

Sunn Smaadh - the deepest samaadhi, Sunn-Asaan - Sanyaas. To be in that state, one has to sit 'with himself', and then after that, way beyond than oneself. Maskeen Ji says, forget about all this, its

beyond comprehension to go beyond oneself, into the state of 'Sunn', such is the sad state of man that he cant even sit with himself. He can sit with friends, family, servants, sevaks, with books, TV, magazines, but is not able to sit with himself. He knows a lot about books, is well read but doesnt anything about himself at all. He knows a lot about wordly affairs, but does not know anything about what goes within him. Similarly, he knows a lot about his wife, her strengths, her weaknesses, good points, bad points, but still does not know anything about himself. Maskeen Ji says the more husband or a wife is closer to his/her partner/family, the farther he/she is away from himself/herself. Man is closer to materialistic objects, yet is not close to finding himself. It is imperative to understand oneself before beginning to understand the nature of God. Bhagat Ravidaas Ji says:

ਅਪ ਤਨ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਕਰੇ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

ap than kaa jo karae beechaar ||

Whoever reflects on his own body

ਤਿਸੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਮਕੰਕਰੁ ਕਰੇ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥੨॥

this nehee jamakankar karae khuaar ||2||

- the Messenger of Death does not abuse him. ||2|| (Ang. 1196 SGGS Ji)

Forget about talks of God, the Gurujis and prophets, first reflect on on own self. One who doesnt even know who he is, what can he possibly know about Akaal Purakh Parmaatma? The more 'Baaharmukhi' a person is, Gurbani says the dumber he will be, and will be even more incompetent in understanding God. That is why, all the so called learned men that may possess all the knowledge of the world, yet this still know nothing about Akaal Purakh.

Here Maskeen Ji divert the topic to something he had thought he wouldnt say in this katha, but will continue nonetheless since the words have come to his rasna and taking them back would be hard for him. He says, one time he was doing study of the Bible, a doubt cropped in his mind and remained with him for a while. The doubt: The new year we celebrate is nothing but a celebration of Jesus Christ (associated with His birthday). If new years starts with a new day, then consider the day the first day was created. That means, there was a time when there was no day at all, nor was the concept of time. So what exactly was it then? Gurbani says, there was just fog everywhere:

ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਹੁੰਧੁਕਾਰਾ ॥

arabdh narabdh dhhundhhookaaraa ||

For endless eons, there was only utter darkness.

ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥

dhharan n gaganaa hukam apaaraa ||

There was no earth or sky; there was only the infinite Command of His Hukam.

ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ॥੧॥

naa dhin rain n chandh n sooraj sunn samaadhh lagaaeidhaa ||1||

There was no day or night, no moon or sun; God sat in primal, profound Samaadhi. ||1|| (Ang. 1035, SGGS Ji)

Maskeen Ji says it is because of lack of words that he has to say 'time' here, otherwise it was not time either because time starts with day and night. How do we measure time? The smallest unit of measuring time is one 'Nimakh', one second. One second, one nimakh, is equal to one breath, nothing more. This small unit of time. a nimakh, a breath, and then we have the biggest unit of time, a year. We don't have any unit that we can use to count time beyond one year.

Similarly, the smallest unit for measuring weight is a 'Ratti', x amount of Rattis equals to one 'Maasa', x amounts of maasa equals one 'Tola', x amounts of tola equals one 'Paiyiaa', x amounts of paayia equals one 'Ser', and x amounts of Sers equals one 'Mann' (quintal). The smallest unit for measuring weight was a Ratti and the biggest unit for measuring weight was Mann. Maskeen Ji describes a plant (a bel) in regions of Jammu and Kashmir that clings on to trees and each bel produces thousands of Rattis, the word 'Ratti' literally means 'red coloured'. Each ratti has got the same weight. If we look at other fruits, nowhere will we find fruits with identical weights, identical colour, identical taste, etc. A ratti, however, is identical to other rattis, weighs the same, has the same colour, has the same shape and all of them have the same taste - they are all bitter. Because of this identical nature of all the rattis, it became a unit of measurement in old times.

Now, Maskeen Ji goes back to talking about the concept of time. He says, since there was no human life form on this earth back then, there was no breath (smallest unit of time) and as such, there was no concept of time. If we can remember the time when time was born with the birth of the first day, THAT time is THE new day, THE new year. But what was THAT day and THAT time? Guru Nanak Dev Ji explains:

ਥਿਤਿ ਵਾਰੁ ਨਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਮਾਹੁ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ॥

thhith vaar naa jogee jaanai ruth maahu naa koe ||

The day and the date are not known to the Yogis, nor is the month or the season.

ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ॥

jaa karathaa sirathee ko saajae aapae jaanai soee ||

The Creator who created this creation-only He Himself knows. (Ang 4, SGGS Ji)

Thus, Maskeen Ji says, celebrating the new year that we all celebrate is just following the sheep and nothing more. Or, we can say, it's just the birthday of Jesus Christ. He was born on 25th September, due to rotations of the sun, this time aligned with 1st January, and that's how followers of Jesus Christ started calling the 1st of January as the 'New Year'. But, this is Jesus Christ's birthday, not New Year! Similarly, Raja Bikramjeet was born on 1 Chetar, Bikrami Samvat, people say it's Bikmayi Year. Again, it was the day Bikramjeet was born, it isn't New year.

Muslim World, on the other hand, does not recognise 1st January as their new year. There are around 22-23 Islamic countries where, the day Mohammed Sahib did his Hajrat, that day is celebrated as their new year. Similarly, different religions and belief systems may have their own dates of celebrating new year. However, all dates coincide with important dates associated with

their religious leaders in some form or the other. But, Maskeen Ji says, the new year is when the first day was created and we cannot ever know anything about that day, only Akaal Purakh knows about it, rest all is fragments of imagination and nothing else. Maskeen Ji, then, talks about one instance when he said in a darbar in delhi that whats the point of creating Nanakshahi calendar if we are to celebrate new year on the 1st of January? Nobody had any answers.

Maskeen Ji apologises for deviating and comes back to the influence of Jesus Christ on the present world. He says, some psychologists believe majority of people in this world are Christians in essence, even though they might have different appearances or practice different faiths. This belief of such psychologists is based on the rituals like the way we all celebrate our birthdays - cutting the cakes and lighting and blowing the candles, etc., these all are Christian rituals. Not only that, the influence of Christianity is deeply rooted in other cultures of the world too, this is reflected by the way we dress, etc. Scholars say it is irrelevant if one is Hindu, Sikh or a Buddhist, every one is under the Christian umbrella in some form.

But the prophet, Jesus Christ, who has got such immense influence on the world, says if someone said to me: A camel has passed through hole of a needle, I will accept that blindly, will not question it even once. But if someone tells me: A super-rich person has attained God, I just wont believe that. Why? Because, a rich person is Baaharmukhi, his whole energy is trapped in worldly affairs, of making money or finding different ways so he can make more money. He is not Antarmukhi, and without being Antarmukhi, it is difficult to be religious, it is difficult to find God. A baharmukhi will try to find God from the worldly elements, while Akaal Purakh is not found in any of those. He is within us, and that is why we have to be Antarmukhi if we have to find Him. Gurbani says:

ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਪਭ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

no nidhh anmrith prabh kaa naam ||

The nine treasures are in the Ambrosial Name of God.

ਦੇਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਇਸ ਕਾ ਬਿਸਾਮੁ ॥ dhaehee mehi eis kaa bisraam ||

Within the human body is its place of rest. (Ang. 293, SGGS Ji)

The person who hasnt even come closer to himself, how can he be religious? (Maskeen Ji apologises again (so that he is not misunderstood) and says, all he is doing is putting forward the Vachan of Mahapurakhs). The closer a person is to himself, the closer is he to Akaal Purakh Parmaatma. Such a person has knocked on Parmaatma's door by entering and looking within himself. Bhagat Kabir Ji says:

ਦਰਮਾਦੇ ਠਾਢੇ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ ॥

dharamaadhae thaadtae dharabaar ||

I stand humbly at Your Court.

ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਕਰੈ ਕੋ ਮੇਰੀ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਖੋਲਿ ਕਿਵਾਰ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

thujh bin surath karai ko maeree dharasan dheejai kholih kivaar ||1|| rehaao ||

Who else can take care of me, other than You? Please open Your door, and grant me the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan. ||1||Pause|| (Ang. 856, SGGS Ji)

Hey Akaal Puraakh Parmaatma, please give me your darshan. Kabir Ji says, Ive become Antarmukhi by shrinking myself, have started looking within myself. Now, I can reach Your doorstep but cannot open the door myself. This door, O Akaal Purakh, only You can open for me. So, how do we know that Bhagat Kabir Ji has reached the doorsteps? Has he reached the doorstep of a Mosque, Temple, Church or Gurdwara? No, not at all, he has reached the doorstep of his own self, has become Antarmukhi.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji says:

ਜਿਤੁ ਦਰਿ ਵਸਹਿ ਕਵਨੁ ਦਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਦਰਾ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਦਰੁ ਕਵਨੁ ਲਹੈ ॥

jith dhar vasehi kavan dhar keheei dharaa bheethar dhar kavan lehai ||

Where is that door, where You live, O Lord? What is that door called? Among all doors, who can find that door? (Ang 877, SGGS Ji)

Who is able to reach that inner door? Only the Antarmukhi, but not everyone is Antarmukhi. As life becomes busier, one starts becoming more Baharmukhi. But a few people who gave birth to poetry, music, painting and other fine art forms are the ones who reached a little bit close to their own self, they took out time to reduce that distance. However, Dharam is born within those who totally became Antarmukhi, toally submerged in their own self. Once we start coming closer to our own self, we start realising presence of The beautiful Fragrance, The Beauty, The Naad, The Nectar, The Colour, that is Akal Purakh. That Beauty that is formless still is the most Beautiful. Dasam Pita Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji:

ਅਰੂਪ ਹੈਂ ॥ ਅਨੂਪ ਹੈਂ ॥

Aroop hain|| Anoop hain||

Thou art Formless Lord ! Thou art Unparalleled Lord! (Page No. 6, Dasam Granth Ji)

This sounds like a puzzle - You are the Most Beautiful even though You dont have any form. This puzzle solves itself when one comes closer to own self.

From here on, Maskeen Ji goes on to summarise this katha.

----- Smapatt -----